

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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S E C R E T MANILA 06819

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F.) RP

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT

REF: (A) STATE 203700; (B) MANILA 06506; (C) STATE 106151

1. CARDINAL SIN AND MOST ESPECIALLY HIS PERSONAL STAFF HAVE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS EVIDENTLY POLITICAL ABOUT A MEETING OF THE CARDINAL WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, AT LEAST IN THE CONTEXT PROPOSED BY US (REF A) AND MOST PROBABLY AT ALL. THEIR COUNTERPROPOSAL IS THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE AND THE CARDINAL'S PERSONAL SECRETARY REPRESENT THE CARDINAL. I AGREED TO FORWARD THE PROPOSAL TO WASHINGTON.

2. MEETING TODAY WITH CARDINAL SIN TO CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY DISCUSSED (REF B) FOR HIS MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, THE CARDINAL EVIDENCED CONCERN LEST SUCH MEETING APPEAR TO IDENTIFY HIM WITH "OPPOSITION" FIGURES ALSO ON THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE. I CONVEYED THE VICE PRESIDENT'S REGRET THAT PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF TIME AND DISTANCE PREVENT HIM FROM CALLING AT THE RESIDENCE, AND TOLD HIM THAT WE WILL, OF COURSE, MAKE CLEAR TO THE GOP THE INITIATIVE FOR THE MEETING DID NOT COME FROM HIM (REFC). AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION THE CARDINAL PROPOSED THAT THE

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MEETING BE UNDERSTOOD TO BE AT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO COME FOR A CUP OF TEA. I READILY AGREED; WHEREUPON THE CARDINAL CALLED IN HIS PERSONAL SECRETARY AND EVIDENT PRINCIPAL ADVISOR, FATHER GABRIEL REYES, TO CONVEY THE "TEA PARTY" SOLUTION. FATHER REYES APPARENTLY DID NOT AGREE.

3. FATHER REYES NOTED THAT THE CARDINAL, WHOSE POSITION IS DELICATELY BALANCED AMONG COMPETING FORCES, INEVITABLY WOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS BY VIRTUE OF THE MEETING. THE CARDINAL NOTED ASIDE, "I AM SURROUNDED BY MY ADVISERS WHO TELL ME WHAT TO DO AND WHO GET MAD WHEN I DON'T DO IT." AFTER THESE EXPRESSIONS OF CANDOR THE DISCUSSION SHIFTED TO THE CARDINAL'S CROWDED SCHEDULE, PLANS TO BE OUT OF TOWN UNTIL NOON MAY 3, UNCERTAINTY ABOUT AIR CONNECTIONS, ETC., UND CONCLUDED WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THE CARDINAL WOULD SEND BISHOP CIRILO ALMARIO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS WELL AS FATHER REYES TO REPRESENT HIM IN THE MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. THE CARDINAL NOTED THAT HE HIMSELF IS PRESIDENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE AND THAT BISHOP ALMARIO AS HIS SECRETARY GENERAL CAN SPEAK FOR HIM AND ALSO PRESENT A BALANCED VIEW OF THE OPINIONS OF VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AMONG PHILIPPINE BISHOPS CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATED QUESTIONS. THE CARDINAL SEEMED ANXIOUS FOR US TO ACCEPT THIS SUGGESTION. I AGREED WITHOUT COMMITMENT (OR ENTHUSIASM) TO CONVEY THE PROPOSAL TO WASHINGTON.

4. WHEN THE CARDINAL INITIALLY PROPOSED THE SUBSTITUTION OF BISHOP ALMARIO IT WAS IN TERMS THAT THE CARDINAL MIGHT WELL NOT RETURN FROM A TRIP IN TIME FOR THE PROPOSED MEETING HOWEVER, AS THE DISCUSSION PROGRESSED IT BECAME INCREAS-
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INGLY EVIDENT THAT WHILE THE CARDINAL WAS RELUCTANT TO PUT IT IN SO MANY WORDS, HE WOULD NOT BE PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE FATHER REYES MADE THIS QUITE CLEUR. SHORTLY BEFORE PARTING THE CARDINAL DID SPEAK VAGUELY ABOUT POSSIBLY FINDING TIME FOR A PRIVATE VISIT (AT THE RESIDENCE) PERHAPS AFTER DINNER MAY 3 AND TO BE ARRANGED AD HOC. IT WAS NOT MY IMPRESSION THAT THIS SUGGESTION WAS MEANT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY AT THIS TIME.

5. I GAVE AS MY IMPRESSION THAT THE MEETING WITH THE CARDINAL WAS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT BUT I OF COURSE COULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE CARDINAL ALSO HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT MANY CONSIDERATIONS. STULL

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